School Practitioner Community of Practice
(A network for sharing & exchange)
December 18, 2019

Topics for discussion –

>**Addressing the stress of winter break and holidays**
>**Follow-up -- School staff or community mental health providers**?

Links to a few other relevant resources & other topics of concern

Note: Go to http://smhp.psych.ucla for links to other Center resources including
>Upcoming initiatives, conferences & workshops
>Calls for grant proposals, presentations, and papers
>Training and job opportunities
>Upcoming webcasts & other professional development opportunities

This resource is from the
Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports, UCLA

Given education budgets, we have been asked to increase our outreach to make our free resources more available (e.g., for planning, professional development, etc.).

So please feel free to share with anyone you think might benefit (e.g., forward our resources to individuals and share on listservs and websites).

****

For those who have been forwarded this and want to receive resources directly, send an email to Ltaylor@ucla.edu

For previous postings of community of practice discussions, see
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/practitioner.htm

****

We wish you a happy holiday season and hope you can use the winter break to recharge and renew your commitment to providing support for your students, yourself, and your colleagues in the new year.

Topic for Discussion –

>**Addressing the stress of winter break and holidays**

From: *5 Ways to Support Students During the Holidays with SEL*
https://apertureed.com/sel-integration/5-ways-support-students-holidays-sel/

This article was written with a view to things to do before the holidays; we think most of the points apply to what also needs to be thought about afterwards.

"Tis the season to be merry, but the holidays can also bring anxiety and stress. Students feel the pressure just as much as adults, and they often benefit from extra encouragement and help this time of year. ... Here are five ways to leverage SEL to help students [after the] holiday season and improve their social and emotional well-being.

>*Manage stress.* Stress and anxiety often increase around the holidays. Plan extra activities that remind students of healthy ways to cope with holiday stress....

>*Encourage students to get active in the community*. ... Help students increase their social engagement and build valuable relationship skills by offering ways to get involved in community, religious, or other social events. Volunteering can bring a sense of fulfillment and pride, and it can help students make new friends and establish a sense of belonging....

1

>*Acknowledge feelings.* The holidays can be tough — especially for students dealing with stressful family situations, who live in poverty, or have lost loved ones around this time. Taking the time to talk about students' feelings helps them work through problems, can make them feel valued, and promotes healthy communication. Carve out class time to talk about how some people might not feel joy during the holidays. Have students reflect on why the holidays might be stressful or unhappy for some. As a group, brainstorm ways students can support those who struggle this time of year.

>*Focus on relationship-building.* For many, the holidays are about getting together with friends and family. But personalities sometimes clash and create challenging group dynamics. ... Plan classroom activities that teach students to accept one another's differences, practice conflict resolution, and increase cooperation. ... Have students write down conflicts they see in the classroom. Then take turns to brainstorm ways to resolve the issues as a group."

Hopefully, the author's fifth point is something schools are doing this week before the break:

"*Plan a class party*. The holidays are a time for celebration. You and your students deserve a reward after a busy fall semester. Throw a class party to thank students for their hard work and spread holiday cheer...."

From: *Stresses, Strengths and Resilience in Adolescents:*
https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10935-019-00570-3

Resilience, or positive adaptation in the face of adversity, mitigates the negative effects of stress and promotes lifelong physical and mental wellbeing... Much of the literature about the stresses youth face seems to enumerate risks and then assume an inevitable trajectory of harm, potential psychopathology, and future illness...The paradoxical finding that stress can both be a health risk but also foster strength has led to an examination of the nature, sources and benefits of resilience, which has been defined as the ability to adapt positively in the face of adversity....

Resilience can be viewed as the dynamic outcome of a set of individual assets shaped by overlapping personal, biological and environmental protective factors. Those individual characteristics that underpin resilience include self-confidence, resourcefulness, self-control, optimism, and mastery. These, in turn can be augmented by external resources such as social, school, and community supports, a stable home environment, and higher socioeconomic status. ..

Emergent Themes for Sources of *Stress*

We asked youth to identify sources of stress in their lives... their responses revealed three broad areas of stress:

>Schoolwork – The most frequent source of stress, named as such by 68% of the 44 who identified specific stressful areas, was schoolwork. ...

>Friends – Friends were the next most frequent source of tension (36%)....

>Family Conflict – Family was primarily a source of strain (27%) ...

Emergent Themes for Sources of *Strength*

We asked participants to identify intrinsic assets and extrinsic resources...

>Interpersonal Sources of Strength Through Social Support and Connection – Strong social connections with family (82%) or friends (77%) fostered resilience. Having a dependable, trustworthy and caring person in one's life was a source of strength for almost all participants. ...

>Approaches Used to Manage Stress – Most participants had methods for managing stress. Many sought support, comfort, advice, or the possibility of just 'venting' from someone with whom they had close emotional ties (81%)....

Overall, we found that adolescents were not without stresses but also had significant insight regarding coping, strength and flourishing, ...

For more general resources on stress, see the Center's Quick Find on
>*Anxiety & Stress* – http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/anxiety.htm

##
Please let us hear from you
Share your perspective about this issue!
And send them and any other comments to Ltaylor@ucla.edu
##

Topic for Discussion – Follow-up to 12/11/19 practitioner
> School staff or community mental health providers?
Comment from colleagues:

 (1) ... I would hope any legislation would emphasize agreements with area Mental Health Centers rather than Schools hiring mental health staff. Staff hired by schools tend to get lost in the school environment. Staff hired by Mental Health Centers continue to have supervision by the Center staff and maintain a professional status....

(2) We must also consider the level of need. I read the message regarding Mental Health Centers to be referencing significant familial dysfunction demanding wrap services. I believe that the schools need take ownership of mental health supports and maintain adequate staffing ration so that the staff does not get, 'lost in the schools'. As well, the site based mental health service providers are positioned to support the TIER 1 and TIER 2 levels available to all students. The school psychologist for example, is able to support the learning piece also. The building of positive relationships among site staff, students and their families is at the core of comprehensive supports. The Mental Health Centers have a valuable place in a continuum of supports. I do not believe that supplanting site services is in the best interest of serving students.

(3) Let me say this, so you understand my perspective. If this individual means clinical mental health staff that would provide ongoing clinical services, there should, of course, be someone in the school with that expertise who can supervise those clinical services. Whether that means hiring through agencies or independently doesn't really matter. I doubt most schools across the country could afford both a licensed supervisor and licensed clinical staff, but someone needs to provide that supervision.

We know that most mental health services across the country are provided by social workers. Many school social workers are licensed as clinical professionals as well as school providers. In CA it's the PPS credential. In WI, school social workers are licensed through the state department of education and may or may not also have their clinical license.   However, the training is very similar in WI even if without a clinical license.   But each state is different for school social workers. Some require an LCSW; some don't.

Generally speaking, while I believe school social workers are highly trained and could provide ongoing and/or intense services, the capacity to do so is determined by time, caseload (!), purposes of the district (in regard to their expectations of school employed personnel), district finances, and so on. Much depends on a community's view and expectations of the school. In "olden days", the purpose of schools was to educate and support students into young adulthood. In recent years, that has significantly expanded to be a "one-stop-shop."

I firmly believe that if schools hired mental health providers--be they school social workers, school psychologists, school counselors—in sufficient numbers, the clinical mental health challenges of students could be addressed much more fully by those school employed staff. Students who would have needs beyond the typical Tier 3 would be the only referrals out. But as you know, insufficient numbers of school-employed mental health staff is the norm across the country.

Some communities, like Milwaukee, have successfully negotiated the collaborative effort between school mental health providers and agency mental health providers. Not done overnight, it has been accomplished with a great deal of trust building, negotiating, finance integration, and with a tremendous amount of "leg work" prior to implementing any system wide services provision.

(4) It has long concerned me, and others, that a major shift has occurred away from school social work in California schools to California schools utilizing community mental health professionals. I have wondered about the quality and extent of building-based mental health support afforded to Saugus High School students prior to November 14th.

In my view, the question you have posed for discussion is rather unfair and unclear, and ought to be better described than simply stating: "Should legislation for mental health in schools emphasize school staff or community mental health providers?" Some readers may not be aware of what you mean by "school staff". Do you mean a guidance counselor, school psychologist or school social worker? Who would choose a resource ambiguously described as "staff" over a resource described as a "mental health provider" to provide mental health intervention and treatment to students?

As you may know, the school social worker in Illinois and in other States may in fact be more highly trained in the treatment of mental disorders than mental health professionals in community mental health centers in those same States. Moreover, school social workers have the added training that comes from a required internship in a school setting before they are able to earn their MSW degree and subsequent endorsement to practice in a school setting.

I hope that as you summarize the responses to this particular question in your next issue that you acknowledge the distinctions that exist in other States that employ school social workers; and include a statement that acknowledges the valuable mental health interventions such school social workers provide to their students.

(5) Re. this topic, a colleague says: "See our book: *School-Based Family Counseling: An Interdisciplinary Practitioner's Guide*." Focuses on integrating schools and family interventions
https://www.routledge.com/School-Based-Family-Counseling-An-Interdisciplinary-Practitioners-Guide/Gerrard-Carter-Ribera/p/book/9781138492677

Links to a few other relevant resources & other topics of concern

Holiday Stress Resource Center – https://www.apa.org/helpcenter/holiday-stress

Interdisciplinary frameworks for schools – https://www.apa.org/pubs/books/4317352?tab=2

5 lessons for education leaders – https://www.smartbrief.com/original/2019/12/5-lessons-education-leaders

Student Perceptions of School Discipline and the Presence of Gangs or Guns at School – https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2020041

Electronic Bullying: Online and by Text – https://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2020042

Reporting on mass shootings – https://www.reportingonmassshootings.org/

IDEA Dispute Resolution Activity in Selected States Varied Based on School Districts' Characteristics – https://www.gao.gov/assets/710/702509.pdf

Is It ADHD or Immaturity? – https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10935-019-00570-3

Disproportionate Discipline – https://publications.csba.org/issue/winter-2019/

5 things to say to students suffering from anxiety – https://www.eschoolnews.com/2019/03/15/5-things-to-say-to-students-suffering-from-anxiety/?all

What video games get right about motivation, and how education can benefit – http://psychlearningcurve.org/what-video-games-get-right-about-motivation-and-how-education-can-benefit/?utm_source=Psych+Learning+Curve&utm_campaign=52befb4eb3-What+Video+Games+Get+Right+About+Motivation&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_ff6044c3a5-52befb4eb3-174482877

Building Bridges for ELLs – http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/dec19/vol77/num04/toc.aspx?utm_source=marketing&utm_medium=email&utm_term=ELL&utm_content=EL&utm_campaign=EL-December2019NewIssue

Vibrant and Healthy Kids: Aligning Science, Practice, and Policy to Advance Health Equity – https://www.nap.edu/catalog/25466/vibrant-and-healthy-kids-aligning-science-practice-and-policy-to?utm_source=NASEM+News+and+Publications&utm_campaign=42a62966f1-Final_Book_2019_12_11_25466&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_96101de015-42a62966f1-103064593&goal=0_96101de015-42a62966f1-103064593&mc_cid=42a62966f1&mc_eid=eac5cd8a62

Equity of opportunity is fundamental to enabling civil rights; transforming student and learning supports is fundamental to enabling equity of opportunity, promoting whole child development, and enhancing school climate.

**So you thought our family get together
at Thanksgiving was stressful –
   well watch out for the upcoming winter holidays!**

****
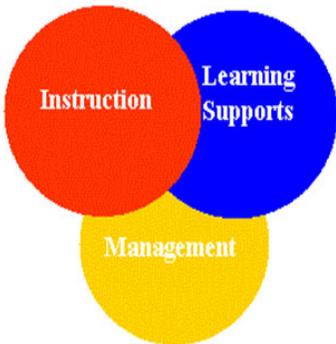
For information about the

National Initiative for Transforming Student and Learning Supports
   go to http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newinitiative.html

Also online are two related free books

Improving School Improvement
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html

Addressing Barriers to Learning: In the Classroom and Schoolwide
http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/improving_school_improvement.html

****

**THE MORE FOLKS SHARE, THE MORE USEFUL AND
INTERESTING THIS RESOURCE BECOMES!**

For new sign-ups – email Ltaylor@ucla.edu

Also send resources ideas, requests, comments, and experiences for sharing.

**We post a broad range of issues and responses to the Net Exchange
on our website at http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/newnetexchange.htm
and on Facebook (access from the Center's home page http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/)**